

48th Assembly

August 2003



NEWSLETTER

Governor Signs Ridley-Thomas Neighborhood Empowerment Bill

Measure Allows for Easier Disposal of Abandoned Vehicles



On July 15th, Governor Davis placed his signature and approval on a measure authored by Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas (D-Los Angeles) that changes the laws governing the removal and disposal of abandoned vehicles. Assembly Bill 478 increases the "low-value" vehicle thresholds to allow for the disposal of additional unwanted vehicles, provides a more efficient removal process and reflects inflationary increases since the original adoption of the Vehicle Code section.

"By facilitating the removal of these vehicles, we are directly contributing to the quality of life in neighborhoods and communities throughout the state," said Ridley-Thomas. "Public agencies are currently required to undertake a lengthy and costly process to dispose of low-value abandoned vehicles. This imposes a significant burden on agencies that are aggressively working to improve the quality of life and environment in communities and neighborhoods

throughout California. Moreover, constituents that are taking action in their respective neighborhoods, in conjunction with local governments throughout the State, will have additional tools to beautify their surrounding area and remove impediments to continued progress."

AB 478 increases the fixed value threshold for abandoned vehicles, which has not been increased for many years and has failed to reflect inflationary increases over this period. Specifically, AB 478 will raise the exemption threshold for the immediate removal of an abandoned vehicle, without the need for noticing the vehicle for 72 hours, from \$100 to \$300. The threshold

for authorizing the disposal of certain abandoned vehicles after a 15-day storage period would also be increased from \$300 to \$500.

These changes will allow for the removal and disposal of abandoned vehicles in a more timely, cost-efficient manner. The City of Los Angeles reports that transportation officials receive more than 2,500 abandoned vehicle removal requests per month. According to city officials, numerous problems are frequently associated with abandoned vehicles, including attractions for crime, especially illegal drug activity, aesthetic degradation of neighborhoods and the obstruction of street sweepers resulting in additional storm water pollutants.

AB 478 is sponsored by the City of Los Angeles and County of Sacramento and has the support of the City of Sacramento, San Bernardino County Sheriff, Sacramento County Sheriff's Department and the League of California Cities. The provisions of this bill go into effect on January 1, 2004.

**48th Assembly District
Empowerment Congress (ADEC)**

"National Night Out"

**August 5th from 6-8 p.m.
Exposition Park**

Ridley-Thomas Tours State as a Delegate of the

“CAMPAIGN TO SAVE CALIFORNIA”

Met with Local Officials to Garner Support for Balanced Budget Solution

In an effort to help break the budget stalemate that has stalled budget negotiations in Sacramento, Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas (D-Los Angeles) and his colleagues, Alan Lowenthal (D-Long Beach) and Joe Simitian (D-Palo Alto) teamed up to tour and talk to local elected officials in Amador and Contra Costa Counties about the impact of budget cuts on local governments and the need for a balanced approach to solving the State's historic budget deficit.

“This is the second time this year I've embarked on a tour of the State to speak to local people about the budget and the impact of deep cuts,” said Ridley-Thomas. “I have visited various communities in the Tri-Valley Area of the San Francisco's East Bay and earlier this year, I visited Fresno, Oakland and San Di-

ego. In all areas of the state, people were clear about their desire to see the Legislature work together and expeditiously to resolve the State's fiscal crisis before the start of the fiscal year. While I concurred with their sentiments, I also conveyed my strong belief that the State cannot simply shift its budget burden to local governments. Not surprisingly, most people, especially local elected officials, are more flexible on the issue of revenue enhancements than my Republican colleagues and support modest tax increases to protect vital government programs and services like education, police and fire protection.”

In early summer, thirty Democratic Assemblymembers, including Ridley-Thomas, Lowenthal and Simitian, fanned the State to urge support for increased taxes as a part of the solution to bridge the State's estimated \$38 billion gap. Members of the delegation were sent to primarily Republican districts in an effort to force their Republican Assemblymembers to negotiate with the Democratic Majority. Budget

negotiations have been at a standstill for couple weeks as the Republicans refuse to explore temporary tax increases to help solve the State's fiscal troubles.

“The impact of cuts will be felt by everyone, but will be most pronounced for the sick, frail and elderly if a Republican plan is adopted,” explained Ridley-Thomas to local elected officials in Amador and Contra Costa Counties. “Their budget proposal excludes over-the-counter drugs from Medi-Cal coverage, reduces SSI/SSP grants by \$70 per month, eliminates a \$50 supplement for disabled service dogs and imposes a one-year moratorium on new Adult Day Health Care Centers. Any one of these cuts alone place seniors and disabled persons in fiscal straits, but in their totality, these cuts will make it infinitely more difficult for those vulnerable populations to meet their basic survival needs.”

At the request of Speaker Herb J. Wesson, Jr., Assemblyman Ridley-Thomas convened town hall meetings in Fresno, Los Angeles, Oakland and San Diego over a two-month period earlier this year to inform the public on the state's budget process and provide an opportunity for public comment on proposals to balance the state budget. For more information on the town hall meetings, please visit Mr. Ridley-Thomas' web page at <http://democrats.assembly.ca.gov/members/a48/>.



Quaford Coleman and Assemblyman Mark Ridley-Thomas at the May 15th dedication of the Mark Ridley-Thomas Community Room in James Cleveland Villa senior complex. Cleveland Villa consists of 34 affordable housing units for seniors.